# The Importance of Dhíkr

## (Remembrance of Allah)

### In the Light of Quran & Sunnah



In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Spiritual strength is a person's true strength and this comes from having strong Eeman (faith). Eeman is nurtured through abundant dhikr (remembrance of Allah) which is just as necessary for a life of Eeman as breathing is necessary to stay alive. As life is a constant battle with Satan, the more trying the situation the more dhikr is required, and this in turn, strengthens a believer's resolve and determination to be steadfast in his religion.

The reason for the misguidance that is rampant in the world is that people have forgotten that Allah is their Lord, that they are His slaves and that they have been sent to this world to be tested. After this worldly life is over, they will be held accountable to their Lord for all their deeds. So a person who wishes to walk on the straight path of guidance and invite others to it must make sure that he does not become oblivious to the remembrance of Allah. This is why, through the Quran and hadith, we have been repeatedly reminded of the importance of prayer and constant remembrance of Allah.

**Importance of Dhikr in the Light of the Quran**

- *"And be not like those who forget Allah; and He made them forget their own souls!"* **(59:19)**
- *"For men and women who remember Allah often, for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and a great reward."* **(33:35)**
- *"O you who believe! let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. If any acts thus, the loss is their own."* **(63:9)**
- *"Then remember Me; I will remember you."* **(2:152)**
- *"But whosoever turns away from My Remembrance, verily for him is a life narrowed down and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment."* **(20:124)**
- *"Call on your Lord with humility and in private."* **(7:55)**
- Tasbeeh (Glorifying Allah) is also given in the Quran as the reason for Yunus (AS) being taken out of the stomach of the fish: *"Had it not been that he (repented and) glorified Allah, he would certainly have remained inside the Fish till the Day of Resurrection."* **(37:143-144)**

**Importance of Dhikr in the Light of the Ahadith of the Prophet (SAW)**

- *"The likeness of the one who remembers his Lord and the one who does not remember Him is like that of a living to a dead person."* **(Bukhari)**
- *"The devil is couching at the heart of the Son of Adam. When he mentions Allah he withdraws, but when he is neglectful, he makes evil suggestions."* **(Bukhari)**
- *"Everything has a polish, and the polish for hearts is remembrance of Allah. Nothing is more calculated to rescue from Allah's punishment than remembrance of Allah."* **(Baihaqi)**
- *"If anyone sits at a place where he does not remember Allah, deprivation will descend on him from Allah; and if he lies at a place where he does not remember Allah, deprivation will descend on him from Allah."* **(Abu Dawood)**
- *"Allah says: 'I am to My servant as he expects of Me, I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in his heart, I remember him to Myself, and if he remembers Me in an assembly, I mention him in an assembly*

*better than his (i.e. the angels), and if he draws nearer to Me a hand's span, I draw nearer to him an arm's length, and if he draws nearer to Me an arm's length, I draw nearer to him a fathom length, and if he comes to Me walking, I rush to him at (great) speed".* **(Bukhari)**

- *"Do not speak much without mentioning Allah, for much talk without mention of Allah produces hardness of heart and the one who is farthest from Allah is he who has a hard heart."* **(Tirmidhi)**

## The Types of Dhikr

### *Prayer*

Prayer is the best form of Allah's remembrance. The Quran repeatedly emphasizes the fact that the spiritual strength required to combat Satan and his forces is derived from the performance of prayer. Prayer strengthens a person and bonds him to Allah, and when this happens he is showered with Allah's favours and blessings. Closeness to Allah results in the heart being purified of doubts and weaknesses and a person is then prepared to deal with all kinds of adversities in his life with courage and determination. When the Prophet (SAW) encountered any difficulties, he would hurry to pray. **(Ahmad)**

### *The Glorious Quran*

Reading the Quran is also a form of dhikr and in some respects it is the most superior form of Allah's remembrance. Allah loves to see a person busy himself with the Quran. The Prophet (SAW) said:

- *"These hearts become rusty just as iron does when water affects it." On being asked what could clear them he replied, "A great amount of remembrance of death and recitation of the Quran."* **(Tirmidhi)**

The 'rust' of the heart means that a person becomes heedless of Allah and oblivious to the Hereafter and this is the cause of all types of sins, great and small.

- "Allah, who is Blessed and Exalted says, *'To him who is so occupied with the Quran as to neglect mentioning Me and making any request of Me, I will give the most excellent things I give to those who ask.'"* **(Tirmidhi)**
- *"Learn and recite the Quran, for to one who learns, recites and uses it in prayer at night, it is like a bag filled with musk whose fragrance is diffused everywhere; and he who learns it and goes to sleep having it within him, is like a bag with musk tied up in it."***(Tirmidhi)**

### *Darood (Invoking Blessings on the Prophet)*

- *"Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet: O you that believe! send blessings on him and salute him with all respect."* **(Quran 33:56)**

Nowhere in the Quran have we been instructed in this manner for even the best of actions that we have been commanded to do. Darood is a supplication to Allah that: *"O my Lord, for his great benevolence to us, please confer innumerable blessings and favours upon our beloved Prophet and raise him to the highest rank in this life and the Hereafter."* After Allah, the Prophet (SAW) is our biggest benefactor and the more familiar we become with his favours upon us, the more time we will dedicate to darood.

Imagine how much you would love and appreciate a person if you were to find out that he regularly and sincerely supplicates for you and your family. Imagine just how well you would treat him when you meet him. From this example we can understand how much the Prophet (SAW) will appreciate a person who sends frequent blessings on him (SAW) with full sincerity,





love and faith and how well the Prophet (SAW) will treat him when he meets him in the Hereafter.

In view of the great love that Allah has for the Prophet (SAW), it is not hard to imagine how pleased and generous even Allah will be to someone who is regular in sending darood on His beloved prophet (SAW). The Prophet (SAW) said:

- *"The people nearest to me on the Day of Judgment will be the ones most conscientious in invoking blessings upon me."* **(Tirmidhi)**
- *"A miser is one who does not invoke blessings upon me when I am mentioned in his presence."***(Tirmidhi.)**
- *"He who invokes one blessings upon me, Allah will shower ten blessings upon him and obliterate ten sins (of his) and elevate him by ten ranks."* **(Tirmidhi)**

### *Du'a (Supplication)*

According to the Quran, worship is the real purpose for which a person was created and according to a Hadith:

*"Supplication is the pith of worship."* **(Tirmidhi)**

So, of all the virtuous deeds a person does, supplication is the most valuable and revered. It is the most powerful way of getting Allah's attention and attracting His Mercy and Kindness. The Prophet (SAW) said:

- *"If the gate of supplication is opened for any of you, the gates of mercy will be opened for him, and Allah is not asked for anything He likes so much as to be asked for security."* **(Tirmidhi)**
- *"Allah will be angry with those who do not make requests of Him."* **(Tirmidhi)**
- *"If anyone finds pleasure in receiving an answer from Allah in times of difficulty, he should make many supplications when times are easy."* **(Tirmidhi)**
- *"Supplication is beneficial regarding things which have happened and things which have not happened, so devote yourselves to supplication, servants of Allah."* **(Tirmidhi)**
- *"Supplicate Allah when you are assured of being answered, and know that Allah does not answer a supplication which comes from a careless and inattentive heart."* **(Tirmidhi)**
- *"None of you should say: 'O Allah, forgive me if You wish; O Allah, be merciful to me if You wish,' but he should always appeal to Allah with determination, for nobody can force Allah to do something against His Will."* **(Bukhari)**
- *"A servant is granted an answer provided he does not ask for anything sinful or for breaking ties of relationship and provided he does not demand an answer quickly, that is when he says he has prayed and prayed and does not think he will be answered, so he grows weary in such circumstances and gives up supplication."* **(Muslim)**
- *"No-one makes a dua without one of three things happening. Either it is answered, or it is stored up for him, or wrong actions are atoned for by it."* **(Muwatta)**
- *"Precautions are of no avail against the decree of Allah, but the supplication benefits in the case of a calamity that strikes or is about to strike. And when a calamity descends the supplication intercepts it and holds it at bay until the Day of Resurrection."* **(Tabarani)**

Of all the spiritual treasures that have been bestowed through the Prophet (SAW) upon the Muslim ummah, the most valuable is the treasure of du'a (supplications) that the Prophet (SAW) himself made to Allah and instructed his ummah to make. The practical aspect of these supplications is that they teach you the etiquette of supplicating to Allah for your needs. By understanding and reflecting on them and repeatedly making the supplications taught to us through the Quran and the Ahadith, we also learn about the kinds of things that a believer should desire and ask Allah for. We should make an effort to memorise these supplications as our needs cannot be expressed in any better words or manner than those used in the Quran and the Ahadith, As it is, there is no aspect of goodness and no requirement one can have in this world and the Hereafter for which we have not been taught an appropriate supplication.

Although we can supplicate to Allah using any language or words and in any manner we like, it is better to memorise the Quranic and Masnoon (done by the Prophet) duas and keep making them at all times of wakefulness including during and after performance of prayer. These supplications can also be made in prostration. Our Prophet (SAW) has taught us the appropriate supplications for almost every occasion and there is no requirement for a person to be in a state of wudhu (ablution), or to raise one hands to supplicate, or to pronounce them with the tongue. Keep supplicating to Allah silently in your heart.

The easiest and shortest way to establish a meaningful relationship with Allah is to constantly supplicate to Him no matter how trivial what you are asking Him for may appear to be. Ask Allah for the fulfillment of all your needs and for being granted relief from grief, sorrows and anxieties. Supplicate like this ... For example, if you are hot: *"O Allah, please give me relief from this heat"*... if there is a power outage: *"O Allah, please restore the power"*... if you are hungry: *"O Allah, give me food"*... when entering the house: *"O Allah, make it pleasant for me"*... when going to the office: *"O Allah, I am going to the office. Protect me from wrongdoing"*... when going to the market: *"O Allah, I need to buy such-and-such thing, let me find what I want at a reasonable price"* ... when visiting the doctor ... *"O Allah inspire him to give me the right medicine so that I will be cured."* Supplicating may seem much too easy and simple for your problems, but just try it and you will see how effective it is. The Prophet (SAW) said:

*"Let one of you ask his Lord for all that he needs, even for the thong of his sandal when it is cut."* **(Tirmidhi)**

This tells us that even for all those things which appear easy, one should ask for Allah's help before adopting the means to do them. No plan or effort on our part can be successful without inspiration and support from Him. So by supplicating, a person is acknowledging his own weaknesses and limitations and that only Allah has the power to make things happen. The more the sincerity and humility with which a supplication is made and the greater one's confidence in Allah's Power and Grace, the greater are the chances of it being answered. The Prophet (SAW) said:

*"Your Lord is munificent and generous, and is ashamed to turn away empty the hands of His servant when he raises them to Him."* **(Abu Dawood)**

It is important to remember that supplication is actually not the words that one utters with the tongue; these are merely its garments.





Supplication is really the plea of the heart and the spirit to Allah for the fulfillment of a person's needs. If you are merely repeating the words again and again but your attention is really focused elsewhere, then it is as if you did not ask for it and hence it is not likely to be granted to you. Additionally, remember that supplication should be made only for things which are permissible (in Islam). At the same time, try to modify and live your life according to the guidance provided by Allah. Although Allah is Gracious and does not disappoint even sinners, it is foolishness and willful obstinacy to expect to have supplications answered despite living your life on income earned through prohibited means.

For a supplication to be acceptable to Allah, it is also necessary that a person's words and actions are in accordance with His guidance.

**Etiquettes of Supplication**

- Sincere intention.
- Begin with praise and glorification of Allah and send blessings on the Prophet (SAW). End the du'a in the same manner.
- Supplicate with the certainty that it will be accepted.
- Do not ask from anyone other than Allah.
- Supplicate for oneself first and then for others.
- Seek forgiveness from Allah while acknowledging one's' sins.
- Acknowledge the blessings of Allah upon oneself and show gratitude.
- Make du'a with full concentration as Allah does not accept the dua of a heedless heart.
- After the du'a say: *"Aameen"*.

**Some of the Special Times of Acceptance of Supplications are:**

After fardh (obligatory) prayers, On finishing the Quran, Between Adhan (the call to prayer) and Iqamah (the call that the prayer is about to start), In prostration, When it rains, In the battlefield, When looking at the Kaaba, After offering prayers in a deserted place where there is no one to see you except Allah, When deserted by one's companions in the battlefield during Jihad, At the time of Tahajjud (In the last part of the night), In prostration, When it is raining, When travelling on a journey, A specific time during Friday, At the time of the pre-dawn meal (Suhur), When fasting, When opening the fast, The Night of Decree (Layla tul Qadr), When drinking ZamZam, On the day of Arafat and while standing on the plain of Arafat, After recitation of the Quran.

***Istighfar & Taubah*** *(Repentance and seeking Allah's forgiveness)*

Istighfar i.e. repenting for ones sins and seeking Allah's forgiveness is a kind of supplication. The conditions of repentance are that one should feel fearful of the consequences of the sin or disobedience that one has committed, feel sincere remorse, resolve to keep away from it and be determined to obey Allah in future.

The humility of a person and the realisation of his subservience and dependence on Allah are at their peak at the time of repenting and asking for forgiveness, because the person is extremely ashamed and depressed at his sin. He feels that he is not worthy to face his Lord as he has not come up to his Lord's expectations from him. For this reason, repentance and seeking forgiveness is a superior level of worship and one of the most effective ways of achieving closeness to Allah.

Normally it is thought that repentance and seeking forgiveness is meant only for sinners. In fact, despite doing everything they could, the devotees of Allah who were specially close and dear to Him (including prophets who are protected from sin and are fault-free) felt they could not give Allah His full due and hence they would continuously seek forgiveness. While Istighfar is a mean of forgiveness for sinners and a way to obtain Allah's Grace and Mercy, for those devotees of Allah dear to Him who are protected from sins or abstain from them, it is a mean of exalting their ranks. The Prophet (SAW) said:

- *"By Allah! I ask for forgiveness from Allah and turn to Him in repentance more than seventy times a day."* **(Bukhari)**
- *"If anyone continually asks pardon, Allah will appoint for him a way out of every distress, and a relief from every anxiety, and will provide for him from where he did not reckon."* **(Abu Dawood)**
- *"Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, stretches out His Hand during the night so that the people repent for the fault committed from dawn till dusk and He stretches out His Hand during the day so that the people may repent for the fault committed from dusk to dawn."* **(Muslim)**
- *"He who repents for a sin is like him who has committed no sin."* **(Tirmidhi)**

After reading these Ahadith one should not get bold in sinning, but rather, it should increase the love one feels for Allah. One should realise that disobeying such a Gracious and Kind Lord is ingratitude and meanness of the worst kind. The purpose of these Ahadith is to reassure a person that if he does commit a sin, he should not despair of the mercy of Allah and through repentance to Allah erase the marks and traces of his sin. Instead of being upset with him, Allah will be very pleased with such a person. Unfortunate and deprived is the person who after knowing all this, does not repent for his sins and ask Allah's pardon, thus securing Allah's good pleasure and Grace.

Many people do not hasten in repenting because they feel they are still healthy, that there is no hurry and that they will repent before they die. This is a Satanic deception. No one knows when death will come, so it is wise to repent for one's sin as soon as one commits it.

Allah tells us in Quran:

*"Allah accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and repent soon afterwards; to them will Allah turn in mercy; for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom. Of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil until death faces one of them and he says "Now have I repented indeed"; nor of those who die rejecting faith: for them have We prepared a punishment most grievous."* **(4:17-18)**

One should consider whatever time one has left in his life as a blessing and good fortune and not delay in repenting to Allah. Our death may come unexpectedly and perhaps we may not be afforded the opportunity to seek Allah's forgiveness.

Normally we see that a person dies in the same condition that he lived. It does not happen very often that a person remains heedless all his life, disobeying Allah constantly, but a day or two before his death, he repents to Him and becomes Allah's friend. So if a person desires that he should die in a state of goodness and piety it is necessary for him to start doing virtuous deeds right away. It is then that one can hope that by the Grace of





Allah, a person's end will be good and that in the Hereafter he will be raised with the pious.

An important aspect of tauba is that if a person repents for a sin and despite trying to refrain from it, he commits it again, he should not despair of Allah's mercy, but keep repenting no matter how many times this happens. He should not get despondent but remain confident that if he sincerely repents to Allah, it is Allah's promise that He will accept His repentance and forgive him.

*"Blessed is he who finds a great amount of asking for pardon in his record"* **(Ibn e Majah)**

## The Beautiful Names of Allah

Another very comprehensive form of Allah's remembrance is to call upon Him with great love and reverence by His beautiful names. The Prophet (SAW) said:

*"Allah Most High has ninety-nine names. He who retains them in his memory will enter Paradise"* **(Tirmidhi)**

This means that the person should fulfill the demands these attributes of Allah make from him.

## LASTLY

In the same way that the best medicines and nourishment have no effect and are useless till a person avoids those things which damage his health, the rewards of dhikr will be nullified by committing major sins and neglecting one's obligatory duties. So along with remembrance of Allah, doing virtuous deeds is also necessary; otherwise it will be like a traveller who journeys in the direction of his destination for a few hours and then for the rest of the day travels in the opposite direction. How can such a person reach his destination? Remember that good deeds are the practical manifestations of dhikr ( remembrance of Allah). The Prophet (SAW) said:

*"Whoever obeyed Allah, it is as if he did Allah's remembrance."*

**(Ashraf Al-Hawashi, P;29)**

If a person, does Allah's remembrance standing , sitting, lying down and at all times, due to the inherent blessing in dhikr, all those things in his life which are considered secular become acts of worship for him. Inviting people to Allah's religion and reflecting on the universe and the signs of Allah in it are also superior forms of dhikr; in fact it is through this that one derives the true benefits of dhikr. If reflection is missing, then it becomes a mere exercise of the tongue and will have no beneficial effect on one's life. A person that spends his life without remembrance of Allah being a big part of his life is in fact like a soldier who enters the battlefield without weapons.

We pray to Allah that He bestow upon us the ability to acquire the treasures of dhikr and supplication and through it, to develop a meaningful and lasting relationship with Him. We also supplicate to Him for the kind of end which the Prophet (SAW) has described:

*"That you should leave the world with the mention of Allah fresh on your tongue."* **(Tirmidhi)** Ameen

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